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ABSTRACT

This paper provides the analysis used to support implementation of a family counseling sequence in a regional mid-western university. It describes the creation of the Family Development Program, a course designed to address these regional needs. The Program utilizes the model and Guidelines for Kansas Comprehensive School Counseling Programs, Family Life Education Standards, and Family Resource Coalition of America Principles. Highlights are presented of the program instruction in several approaches to services supporting family well being and individual development. The program attempts to empower service providers, especially counselors, to support program change directed at enhancing family well being, and discusses how to advocate directly on behalf of children, youth, and families. Appendix A is "Characteristics of Youth in Western Kansas"; and Appendix B is "Handout Resources." (Contains 5 tables and 45 references.) (Author/JDM)

* TOWARD INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WELL-BEING: A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR
INITIATING COUNSELING PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF FAMILY RESOURCES IN
WESTERN KANSAS COMMUNITIES **

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ABSTRACT

In response to dramatic political and socio-economic change within the region, eighty-one theses were analyzed for content relating to propositions regarding family, individual and community development. Generally, the analysis provided information in support of the implementation of a family counseling sequence in a regional mid-western university. Also, Family Development Programs is a course which addresses a regional need utilizing the model and Guidelines for Kansas Comprehensive School Counseling Program(s), Family Life Education Standards, and Family Resource Coalition of America Principles. The implementation of this course is described, resources are presented, and conclusions are generated regarding the match between the course experience, regional needs, and strategies for utilizing research and theory-based information in counseling programs. Suggestions are provided to enhance the role and function of the school and community counselor. Also, approaches to supplement current community counseling programs are addressed.

Key Words: Family Counseling Programs, Family Life Education, Family Resource Support

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Introduction

Nationally, dramatic socioeconomic and political change, i.e., technological innovation, and corporate realignment and mobility provide communities with challenges in addressing the well-being of individuals and families (Herr, 1989). In an effort to influence family policy with research findings, family development leaders (Olson, 1990), provided evidence that the resulting turbulence challenged communities regarding policy making.

< Voydanoff, 1990 indicated the likelihood of a widening gap between "those who have and those who have-not". Further, it was in many ways a fundamental precondition which set the stage for substantial decreases in family material well-being, and declines in personal opportunity.

< Hogan, 1990 pointed out that this is particularly true for single-parent families and women.

< Burr, 1990 noted that circumstances like this are often linked to growing up in non-supportive, rigid, or inconsistent families. Therefore, while these circumstances may be overcome in a number of families, in some American communities, the

quality of the home in which children receive care may be threatened by adult incidents of drug abuse, suicide, alcoholism, divorce, teenage pregnancy, and family violence.

In many ways, domestic violence represents a paradoxical quality often found within the underbelly of American culture. While roughly 1 in 4 experience personal violation, it is believed far greater because of likely under-reporting or being ignored. This seems especially probable in rural communities where people may be quite familiar with each other.

< For Strauss, 1990 violence often originates within the family and its shadow emerges in a number of circumstances which hinder the development of children and youth, i.e., student achievement, preparation for relationships, divorce, running away, drug involvement, and child and youth crime (Olson, 1990).

< Also, early parenthood, poverty, male dominance and beliefs about physical punishment appear problematic in the growing body of research on family violence.

< Paradoxically, Strauss projects that while most parents spank their toddlers, perhaps with the intent of discipline and control, the practice may be a heavy contributor to community violence.

These phenomena frame a number of more specific concerns within communities, especially in rural areas where family

support resources may be strained. An important ingredient may be the approach taken to address the situation. For example, many communities take an attribution approach to family and youth issues, predicated on a medical-disease model. However, these topics of community concern are more likely multidimensional in nature.

< Therefore, traditional human service modes may not be equipped by mandate, caseload, or dominant practice methods to address the full range of stresses experienced by families seeking service, especially those with children (Weiss & Halpern, 1990).

< Further, the attribution model is believed to stigmatize individuals (Gardner, 1990), further eroding frayed self-concepts or supporting denial strategies to avoid professional contact.

< Also, rural residents do not often utilize existing resources because of concern for travel, labeling, and practitioner background (Furrow, Russell, Jurich & Wright, 1991).

< Therefore, some program specialists are beginning to believe that this problem can be substantially reduced by policy and practice which more adequately addresses community structure, i.e., collaboration with families (Bruner, 1990).

< However, while attempting to address individual well-being and family vulnerability, many seem to depend on a decision

making style where authority is initiated at the top levels on the assumption that empowerment "trickles down" to community members (Holt, 1992; Keegan, 1989) who may need a specific service.

In contrast, there is growing recognition that strategic innovations in communities and programs is generated at the grass roots level and is likely to require structural change (Holt, 1992), persistence in leadership (Vidish & Bensman, 1968), and diverse qualities in service personnel. It seems reasonable to consider and record elements of community struggle as the characteristics of effective program development emerge in rural communities.

In summary, phenomena within/out the family elicit a number of youth and family concerns. In many ways, rural communities may be partners in the etiology of some challenges to well-being. Also, there is growing evidence traditional approaches have limited effectiveness in alleviating childhood problems and supporting family well-being. It may be that, communities and organizations within them are anchored in program styles of delivery that minimize or frustrate necessary change. Therefore, to the degree this is true, conventional approaches may contribute more to community stability than to personal well-being or family health of members. In other words, it may be

necessary for family development programs to provide a means for communities to assess their needs and a method for structural change to complement existing skill-building approaches and strategies. For example, family well-being may not be enriched by additional information about parenting, but may require support as the new skill is developed, and guidance in application to marital decisions (Stahmann & Salts, 1993).

The concept of family is changing rapidly (Olson, 1990). Therefore, the social fabric of many communities appears increasingly diverse, which may provide opportunities to attend and assess personal needs and differences in choice making styles while considering unique family and personal issues as resources.

< Rubin, 1990 indicated that currently, communities are likely composed of nuclear families, single individuals, non-marital heterosexual and gay male or lesbian cohabitation, single-parent families, remarried and step-families, childlessness, non-secretive extramarital relations, and multi-adult households.

< Also, McCubbin, 1990 pointed out that ethnicity and intermarriage between ethnic groups is an emerging characteristic in many communities.

Therefore, to the degree communities standardize (Shumm & Bollman, 1981) methods of service delivery, these conditions may

provide considerable challenge for program development and community policy.

Family Development Program Considerations

Therefore, multidimensional (Thomas, Schvaneidt, & Young, 1993, p. 126) and comprehensive (Arcus, Schvaneidt & Moss, 1993, p. 15) qualities are important considerations in programs which address the needs of families and issues of the young. Also, there are several trends commonly associated with family phenomena which are important considerations in establishing family resource support. Program obstacles include socioeconomic, ethnic, gender, age, and world view status. Therefore, an important question for service providers is whether opportunities are available for adults from different working class, ethnic and world view orientations to participate in the efforts to utilize quality parenting information. For example, programs are developed to benefit those who appear to professionals as needing the service. However, their professional assessment may reflect a preference for the authoritative style within middle-class families and over-generalizing its fit (appropriateness). Therefore, in some instances, local professionals may provide a service which potential participants find alienating. This may mean that

current program designs may need to include the capability of initiating inter-organizational groupings in order to consider common services, participants, concerns, and resources. This dimension has substantial promise for rural communities, but may be hampered by informal application strategies (Czaplewski & Jorgansen, 1993, p. 71; Thomas, Schvaneveldt, & Young, 1993, p. 118).

For example, Thomas, Schvaneveldt and Young (1993) describe the features of the Tyler Model utilized in common program designs including: Statement of aims and objectives, identification of the desired experience, provision for an outline of an implementation plan, and specification of evaluative strategies (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993, p. 110). This program framework may be viewed in a flexible manner and adapted to specific communities and organizations. However, in order to facilitate meaningful restructuring of program activities and strategies, an opportunity for review of relevant family research and developmental theory, consultation with professionals with an appropriate background, or inclusion of an external resource or intuitive facility (Shumm & Bollman, 1981) to the planning procedure may be necessary. An important ingredient in the strategic planning process seems to involve providing for the fit between family and individual needs to

community service. To the degree a program is able to match needs with services seems likely to increase its power and influence among participants and confidence more generally within the community. However, when strategic planning appears weighted toward honoring community values rather than a means for research based information or developmental theory to be applied, may denigrate the strategic planning procedure. Determining how and whether this occurs can be an important research effort or intuitive challenge (Shumm & Bollman, 1981).

Further, it may be important for program personnel to consider participation in teams, coalitions and partnerships (Lewis-Rowley, Brasher, Moss, Duncan, & Stiles, 1993, p. 47) with external communities, programs, and services. These strategies have a potential to provide a means for significant changes in services by attending to program structure through the review of missions and objectives which account for diversity among community programs. In this way, the review of attitudes about "turf" and "ownership" can be challenged and re-integrated. However, often evaluation itself may be politicized (Thomas, Schvaneveldt & Young, 1993) rather than directed toward providing critical appraisal of services. Therefore, the quality of evaluation may play a critical role in indicating program commitment to community needs. This may indicate a challenge for

family life education programs to implement situational perspective (Thomas, Schvaneveldt & young, 1993) in evaluation, and address the ways family development programs are experienced by participants (Arcus, M., 1993) in order to adequately determine program effects.

For example, the approach of family development programs seems most appropriate when preventing (Arcus, Schvaneveldt & Moss, 1993) destructive and severe outcomes. Most seem to agree that the appealing qualities of the prevention mode involve less intensity, require fewer controls on activity of participants, and include less expense than treatment programs. In this way, the dynamic tension which exists between education and therapy approaches (Arcus, Schvaneveldt & Moss, 1993), the strengths versus problems orientation (ibid, p. 23), and professional agendas regarding approaches to ethnicity and diversity (Hildreth & Sugawara, 1993) and gender (Bubolz & McKenry, 1993) in providing service is likely reduced. However, such efforts may be diluted or enhanced by distance between communities and small numbers of participants, and while detectable through cost, are less amenable to formal evaluation and assessment in rural areas.

In summary, programs which are most likely to make important contributions to family and individual development in the communities of this mid-western region are likely to address the

following qualities: Multidimensional focus, comprehensive applications, strategic and systematic designs, active strategies to implement partnerships and collaborations, a focus on prevention, a commitment to address issues of diversity, and a willingness to assess change holistically. While not exhaustive, these characteristics are intended to provide a background for assessment of family-based services in a geographic area with declining resources and an apparent linear focus on family and individual concerns. To the degree family life education guidelines and principles are ignored, school and community programs are likely diminished in important ways. Given these community and program issues, the purpose here is to describe an adapted family life education curriculum in a higher education institution used for preparation of school and community counselors to address family and individual concerns.

Method of Regional Rural Needs Assessment

The community conflict and ambiguity described may elicit a considerable number of burdens and challenges to program development in schools and agencies. However, many areas may not have the data and assessments as a foundation to program development decisions. Further, hurdles to program implementation may be personalized and viewed as qualities and characteristics of various community group members rather than

planning issues. Therefore, service delivery may be hampered by interpersonal blame rather than systematic problem solving. However, a certain amount of information and accountability may already exist, and be useful for accountability assessments. Such a source of information was available through a long standing research program. Eighty-one theses from 1989-94 (Fort Hays State University, Counseling Division) were examined for information regarding support or denial of support for individual and family development available in communities. Generally, to the degree support was available to agencies and schools in the region, development, program outcomes, professional commitment and other program resources were presumed to be high. To the degree support was lacking, these elements were expected to be reduced or not detected.

The theses were content analyzed by graduate students who were trained in the technique and provided with substantial direction by a project director, who also participated in the proposals and defenses of the documents. It was possible for a single thesis to provide information for more than one proposition. Therefore, totals will not always be the same as the number of theses involved in the exercise (81). The t-test for independent means was employed to determine the level of significance for support or non-support of the propositions

developed over time. The t-test was recently used to determine differences in student achievement as influenced by family involvement provided by single-parent and two-parent households (Balli, Demo & Wedman, 1998). An initial group of propositions was established following a discussion with the first evaluators. Two others were included as a group of theses or variables accumulated did not seem directly related to existing propositions. Overall, there was evidence in 224 instances to confirm propositions, and 92 instances in the 81 theses reviewed to disconfirm the propositions ($t = 2.1043$, $p < .025$). Other propositions included (Table I):

Proposition 1: Socioeconomic status (SES), as measured by income, education level or occupation status will be more influential to development than maturation. Forty-two theses provided information in support of this proposition and eight provided information toward denial ($t = 3.4345$, $p = < .0005$).

Proposition 2: The influence of the perception of family structure will be a stronger influence on individual development than maturation. Twenty-eight of the theses provided information to confirm this proposition and eight provided information to not confirm it ($t = 3.05$, $p = < .005$).

Proposition 3: The influence of programs does not exert a significant influence on personal development. Twenty-two theses provided information to confirm this proposition, and 19 provided information to disconfirm it ($t = -.1118$, n.s.).

Proposition 4: The perception of well-being of individuals is negative (or positive well-being is not detected). Forty-four theses confirmed this proposition and twenty-three papers did not confirm it ($t = 1.2979$, n.s.).

Proposition 5: Personal qualities (gender, age, ethnicity) exert a negative influence on well-being when program services are reduced. Sixty-eight theses supported this proposition and twenty-seven did not support the proposition ($t = 1.9322$, $p = <.025$).

Proposition 6: When mediators of SES or personal or family structure support participation in services, individual well-being improves. One thesis confirmed this proposition and seven disconfirmed it ($t = -3.7947$, n.s.).

Proposition 7: Program service supports student development even though there may be challenge. Nineteen theses supported this proposition while seven did not support it ($t = 2.4841$, $p < .01$).

These results indicate there may be very little personal enrichment occurring within communities which would not occur without any program service or by chance. Further, programs do not seem to provide services which influence well-being in a meaningful way, and there is some evidence that the support which does exist may influence well-being in a negative way. Also, while well-being is not necessarily depleted, when programs are reduced decreases in well-being are detected within groups which are already subject to disadvantages. Further, there needs to be an extended examination of programs which confront traditional community structures. According to proposition #6, attempts to mediate such effects may be destructive to individuals in the program. There are elements of hope, however. Some programs are making changes in a productive way, according to proposition #7.

Put Table 1 About Here

Nearly half (40) of the thesis topics focused on academic satisfaction, career development or personal self concept, as the dependent variable (Table II). A secondary review of topics indicated that most were concerned about thirty-four human growth and development issues within thirty-one school counseling programs. This is contrasted by only two group studies and sixteen mental health and community counseling research projects (Table V). Further, forty-three of the papers sampled an adult population for study, while only nine accessed children (Table III). Also, fifty-four samples had fifty or more participants, but fewer than two hundred (Table IV).

Put Tables 2-5 About Here

Finally, it is likely desirable that most studies took place in western Kansas, although it may be beneficial to distribute future projects in the southwest area of the state. It is interesting that the northwest portion concentrates on school performance topics while the southwest seemed to focus more on social issues.

Recommendations which seem apparent include more research with larger or smaller samples, and a wider array of topics especially including family interactions and program development. Further, there are indications that school counselors are being introduced to student concerns which go beyond career decisions and there is a desire to be more effective in this work. There is some danger in making too much of these results in that in most of the theses, there were usually more variables than the design could accommodate, therefore diluting the statistical effect.

Program Implementation Recommendations

Family Life Education program standards provide implementation guidelines for family life education, enrichment and treatment (Arcus, Schvaneveldt & Moss, 1993). Therefore, the content has great potential to be useful for educators, school and community counselors. Also, the approaches described in the Framework for Life-Span Family Life Education are developmental in orientation, contain a knowledge base which is multi-disciplinary and are relevant throughout the life span (Arcus, Schvaneveldt & Moss, 1993). Also, Family Life Education in practice is multi-disciplinary (Stahmann & Salts, 1993), comprehensive and developmentally appropriate (Engel, Saracino & Bergen, 1993), advocates a style which matches adult and child

needs (Brock, Oertwain & Coufal, 1993), allows for alternative choices within diverse lifestyles (Rettig, Rossmann & Hogan, 1993), provides for systematic problem solving for novel conditions (Kieren & Doherty-Poirier, 1993), emphasizes strategies through the life-span (Arcus, Schvaneveldt & Moss, 1993) to facilitate well-being among family members. Finally, family resource management may be an underutilized content area (Rettig, Rossmann & Hogan, 1993) for families. The current concern regards the degree Family Life Education addresses the well-being of a rural region as assessed in this project.

The Family Resource Coalition of America (FRCA) provides a multi-disciplinary approach to family support through resource development. It provides a check list including program structure and activities, includes planning, funding and budget preparation, community needs assessment, choice of program model, and staffing suggestions, and defining the population of families to be recruited (Musick & Weissbourd, 1988). FRCA advocates a set of principles for family support practitioners. They include: Working together as practitioners, comprehensive program qualities, views the family as a resource, affirmation of multiculturalism, acknowledges that families are embedded in communities, advocates for and includes participating families, recognition that informal family resources support development,

flexibility in response to family concerns, and consistency of principles in daily practices (Family Resource Coalition of America, 1999).

Further preparation was recognized among school and community counselors (Guss, 1992) as necessary in order to address family and individual concerns found throughout the region. Four courses were established to address this need for additional formal background: Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling, Family Counseling, Advanced Family Counseling and Family Development Programs. In addition, clinical experiences in family counseling and individualized guided studies were made available.

Family Development Programs was introduced in 1994 to facilitate professional activities within a disparate professional group, i.e., teachers, counselors and administrators, and others. The purpose of this class was to provide an opportunity to apply family systems approaches and become further aware of developmental issues with children and youth for program planning in the context of community (Sporakowski, 1993). It utilizes a solution-focused model (Berg, 1994) to prepare students for changes in style of service delivery. Also, it includes opportunities to facilitate networking, collaboration and partnerships in strategic planning

procedures. Throughout the course, students are expected to apply the brief therapy model to their current understanding of community needs as they practice family life education exercises, participate in strategic planning activities, assess current family development programs, and complete a planning document. They are further expected to become aware of individual strategies and group implementation techniques which facilitate personal empowerment and family resource support. The content of course delivery emphasizes the importance of implementing problem-solving strategies, marital support and enrichment, alternative approaches to parenting, and the creation of safe environments for communities and schools.

Arcus, Schvaneveldt, and Moss, (1993) recommend a multi-disciplinary approach for Family Life Education and Stahmann and Salts (1993) support its use in programs which address relationships (Arcus, Schvaneveldt & Moss, 1993). Students in this course regularly include professionals from schools and special education, the ministry and community agencies. Therefore, alternative texts are provided which more closely fit their areas of interest. They include:

Hinkle, S. & Wells, M. (1995). Family Counseling in the Schools: Effective Strategies and Interventions for Counselors, Psychologists and Therapists. Greensboro, NC: ERIC/CASS Publications.

Lambrie, R. & Daniels-Mohring (1993). Family Systems Within Educational Contexts: Understanding Students with Special Needs. Denver, CO: Love Publishing.

Also, presenters often include professionals from social work, the law and corrections, administration, the ministry, and home economics and extension along with education. To provide a common vocabulary, an explanatory document for Minuchin, Satir, and Bowen frameworks is provided all students (Lambrie & Daniels-Mohring, 1993, Appendix). This allows some common understandings of family systems and counseling concepts, and assures students that systems strategies are theoretically grounded. Further, an important activity within the class is a strategic planning exercise which includes dialogue between representatives of different disciplines, and assessment of family resources which utilizes family support as a descriptive characteristic.

Family life education may include enrichment and treatment (Arcus, Schvaneveldt & Moss, 1993). Therefore, it may be useful as a foundation for family-based program development. The content of the course emphasizes that traditional marriage may remain a dominant feature in rural communities. However, other relational formats are practiced, primarily single-parent, cohabitation, and dual-career styles of living. Therefore, marital (relationship) enrichment is highlighted in several ways.

First, activities to implement classroom discussion regarding the belief that healthy relationships are more likely to provide safe and enriched environments for parenting (Mims, 1993). Second, a unit on marital quality emphasizes strategies for mutuality in decisions, flexibility in awareness, and interpersonal caring and communication (Olson, Russell, Sprenkle, 1989). Third, many students select an activity which allows them the opportunity to provide relationship support (Blaisure & Pfaffy, 1993), and fourth, group support is featured as an important method for delivery of self-help services in rural communities (Ziegler, 1995), and specifically for marital enrichment (Wood & Wood, 1994?) as a context driven support group approach. Finally, a model for conflict resolution in intimate relationships is described and outlined (Nelson, 1988).

Three methods of problem-solving and restructuring diverse perceptions of events are given substantial coverage in Family Development Programs. One method is the Nominal Group Technique which includes: individualized listing of common elements, inclusive listing as participants report all the items in random order, assessment of common features within elements and a reordering of items, determination of priorities and commitment phases. Also, the Nominal Group Technique is used in a virtual classroom activity. Here, students from off-campus sites are

included in the strategic planning process (Appendix). A second method is labeled the Helping Process. It is introduced in this course to provide new students a model for systematic assessment of individual characteristics, and more experienced students with review of a structure for implementing counseling in a planned way. It contains a listing of concerns, opportunities to discuss goals which often includes developmental stages, acknowledges problem descriptions as phenomena which complicate goal attainment, a listing of alternative activities to achieve developmental goals, a commitment phase for a single choice, and a follow-up stage to determine the outcome of a decision. A third method is a didactic presentation of alternative organizational decision making structures, including classical organizations, the Deming method, scientific management, Quality Performance Accreditation, and Outcomes Accreditation. An additional perspective provided for school counselors is the Kansas Comprehensive School Counseling Program: Model and Guidelines (Guidance Communications Council Task Force, 1993) which features community context and an expanded role for school counselors.

Parenting programs seem to receive emphasis as students recruit Family Forum (providers who implement programs which feature family support) participants. They present their

programs during class. Therefore, an orientation to theory based approaches to parenting seems important to review or survey the many attractive and reasonable parenting programs available. Two parent training programs are recommended throughout the course and copies are on loan. They are heavily influenced by an Adlerian approach:

Glenn, S. & Lott, L. (1993). Developing Capable People. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publications.

Nelson, J., Lott, L. & Glenn, S. (1993) Positive Discipline A-Z: 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publications.

An important challenge for parenting programs seems to be matching the diverse qualities between parent, program and child. This may be especially true in situations which require substantial adaptation to the authoritative model, i.e. ethnically diverse adults, single parent and remarried families (Brock, Oertwain & Coufel, 1993). Also, modifications of traditional parenting patterns seem difficult for many parents who seem to struggle with adaptation to a traditional nuclear family model, specifically dual-career and single parent family modes. However, ethnic diversity and remarriage often provide unique challenges to parenting. A clinical observation for classroom discussion is: traditional modes of parenting are often less effective in non-traditional relationships and may

facilitate conflict, especially as children reach adolescence. In other words, students are asked to consider the possibility that conventional parenting strategies may be problematic, especially in families of diversity and remarried families. Further, a special reframing exercise features the "spirited child" as an alternative model (Kurchinka, 1991) through handouts and discussion.

Violence is a pervasive theme throughout the classroom discussions of community planning. Individual concerns are typically introduced through child and youth behaviors, i.e., gang and cult membership, youth suicide, dropping out of school, substance abuse, and currently, guns and violence in schools. Handout material is available which addresses these concerns, however, domestic violence may be a more personalized issue in the region. For example, sexual abuse of children, while very real, is presented to describe community styles of implementing violence prevention programs. It is important to note that various available programs have a capability to address sexual abuse. For example, a presenter describes a local short-term residential program for abused women, and a relational approach for community action is documented through a video-tape program (Guss, Leftwich & Hansen, 1994). This material is followed up with a copy of a newsletter report with a written debriefing of

the material in the conference (Guss, 1995). Both video and newsletter are reviewed as homework and discussed regarding implications for program changes to address sexual abuse. Often necessary changes in community structure are noted. For example, willingness to talk about sexual topics may be facilitated through collaborations between schools and churches.

It is common to bring a personal expression of "blame" to many of these topics. Therefore, unique opportunities to introduce developmental challenges in systems contexts are available as well. Activities within the secondary required text offer specific activities for large group presentations (Sporakowski, 1993). Also, a review of the following is provided as part of formal classroom presentation:

Ferrari, T. (1993): "Families in Society" (p. 13), and
Perkins, D. (1993): "The Ecological Model of Human
Development" (p. 51).

Feedback from students during debriefing discussions often reflects personalization of developmental and systems perspectives. For example, the work of Strauss (1996) is used to introduce the topic of spanking, which many parents practice. However, spanking may contribute in dramatic ways to community violence. Strauss' research elicits serious controversy to be taken back to rural communities, and a powerful contradiction to conventional parenting strategies. It is used as an example of

how a conventional activity may play a role in community violence. Further, it illustrates how community values and expectations seem to play a role in facilitating what is stated as undesirable. Finally, handouts address some community concerns and alternative helping strategies regarding community violence (Table II) and other issues.

Sexual concerns may be most meaningfully addressed at different developmental levels (Engel, Saracino & Bergen, 1993). There is concern for early sexual activity among adolescents and adult sexual behaviors outside committed relationships. An additional issue is the community attitude regarding sexual orientation. A handout presents techniques for informing students about sexuality through the life span (Leslie-Johnson, 1993, p. 35). It deals with topics for parents to discuss with children from infant sensorimotor pleasuring to active adolescent decision making. Discussion related to this handout usually reveals the importance of age appropriate interactions with caregivers, and the vulnerability of content to community attitudes. According to these discussions, parents tend to ignore sexuality discussions and allow communities to undermine the developmental focus of information while appearing to be concerned about adolescent sexuality by advocating abstinence.

Discussion of sexual activity outside an intimate relationship often features another opportunity for explorations in values, differences in trust thresholds and styles of relational dialogue, and individuation of personal and needs in other. Finally, attitudes toward sexual orientation indicates the limited exposure of school and community counseling agencies to this phenomenon. There is some benefit to covering the topic developmentally, paradoxically, and relationally. Handouts are provided to indicate gay and lesbian identity development, and the degree learning can occur by listening to gay men and lesbian women to determine if there is more open communication. Students may not disclose their sexual orientation. Also, media sources often provide examples of painful relational adaptations to community attitudes among gay and lesbian individuals which can be utilized for discussion. A frequent observation is that discussion focuses on human concerns and sexual orientation is irrelevant. However, when students introduce personal experiences (which often happens informally among students), providing there is openness regarding personal gay or lesbian identity, awareness is often elevated. Also, a similar effect occurs if a presenter is available who is comfortable addressing gay and lesbian issues. In these limited ways heterosexual bias

may become an excellent area to focus awareness on community homogeneity in a society working to identify itself as diverse.

Finally, the needs for multi-cultural counseling and community diversity appear as common themes in rural schools and communities (Hawkes, Kutner et al, 1981). For this class, lack of recognition for community diversity is addressed as a broad-based phenomena, including homophobia, sexism and racism. It seems as appropriate to introduce the need for tolerance as conflicts within conventional values and styles are explored, i.e., bias by social class, learning styles and physical attractiveness. The focus of the class is not on characteristics of various groups but in how schools and communities address diversity, specifically, how they may provide support. A profile of cultural qualities which have the potential to anchor dialogue between ethnic groups and provide the basis for multi-cultural exchanges about common concerns (Mitstifer, 1997) is provided as a metaphor for sharing, i.e., value for children and the elderly (Native American), commitment to education and empowerment of women (Afro-American), intensity, passion and commitment (Latino), and personal and family resilience (Asian-American). The material is presented to facilitate concentration on the ethical responsibility for the counselor to increasingly develop openness to people in pain from oppressive acts, rather

than addressing them as target groups. Therefore, activities for personal growth receive attention in discussion and materials provided by presenters. Other activities which facilitate this objective include:

Walsh, D. (1995). Selling Out America's Children (Family Information Services).

Jax, J. (1993). Families in Society: The impact of Ethnocentrism on Culturally Diverse Families (Family Life Education Teacher's Kit).

In summary, a sequence of courses was implemented to address the perceived needs of western Kansas counseling professionals as exposed by a meta-analysis of quantitative research projects. A single course was a part of this effort, Family Development Programs, which implemented a Family Life Education model within its curriculum features the systems and developmental perspectives in its discussion of various regional community concerns. Also, it highlights individual, large group, support group and family counseling approaches for services to support family well-being and individual development. Its focus is on improving marital quality and parenting, recovery from painful events, i.e. abuse and divorce, and providing for community safety. Further, it features developmental approaches to sexuality and multi-cultural topics, and includes a group planning exercise, peer review of professional programs, and

opportunities to exercise personal commitment to active methods of adaptation. It attempts to empower service providers, especially counselors, to support program change directed at enhancing family well-being, and advocate directly on behalf of children, youth and families.

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Appendix A

The following characteristics were reported as commonly observed within youth in western Kansas. They include:

Substance abuse and underage drinking, single parent families, poor parenting skills, peer violence, sexual abuse and incest, school violence, child abuse and neglect (physical, sexual, and emotional), poverty, lack of jobs and opportunity, unemployment and underemployment, early sexual activity, isolation, loneliness, community passivity and denial.

According to class discussion, living conditions may irritate the environment for individuals struggling with these circumstances and make healing difficult. These conditions include:

Socioeconomic change, attitudes toward community violence, family stress, dual career issues, divorce and parenting relationships, cyclical exploitation and opportunism between community members, language barriers, life skills and isolation and inadequate adult modeling.

Regional Goals

1. Contributions to the development of a means for community transformation in support of family well-being and personal development.
2. The creation of partnerships between school and community counselors, professionals and parents so assure child and youth safety.
3. The development of collaborative efforts between schools, parents and community to provide increased learning opportunities for children and youth.

Strategic Planning Proposals

1. Provide comprehensive services.
2. Include opportunities for community participation.
3. Initiate start up funding through grant writing.
4. Implement a network of volunteers.

5. Collaborate and partner with corporate, business, labor, ethnic and feminist leaders.
6. Provide parents with parenting, career and sexuality education.
7. Develop a Family Resource Support Center
8. Implement a regional interagency council of professionals.
9. Include conscious multi-cultural planning and generational dialogues regarding community safety and environmental health in community planning mission statements.

Appendix B

Handout Resources

1. Crary, E. (1993). People and Programs: Problem solving process (p. 7-8).
2. DeLeonardis, G. (1992). Marriage & Family Development Focus Issues: Families After Divorce: Two Important Issues (p. 7-9).
3. Dooley, M. (1993). Media and Outreach: 20 ways to help you cope with holiday stress (p. 54).
4. Dwyer, L. Media and Outreach: Ten things every child should know about surviving divorce (p. 18).
5. Felcher, D. and Wright, B. (1994). Parenting and Child Development: Helping your children deal with anger (p. 31).
6. Garon, R. & Holmes, J. (1992). Marriage and Family Development: Suggestions for coping with feelings of loss (p. 50).
7. Kimball, G. (1995). Youth Development Focus Issue: How to Survive Your Parents Divorce: Kids' Advice to Kids (p. 11-12).
8. Kristensen, N. (1993). Focus Issue on Healthy Family Development: Boundaries (p. 9-13).
9. Kurchinka, M. (1991). Research and Reviews: Raising the spirited child credo (p. 31-32).
10. Lamberts, M. & Scarlett, R. (1994). Basic Parenting: Health-immunization protects children (p. 12).
11. Molgaard, V. (1992). Marriage and Family Development: Prevention of Family Violence: Strategies for the Family Life Educator (p. 59-65).
12. Mandell, B. (1992). Youth Development: Strategies for parents to help their child's adjustment (to divorce) based on developmental needs p. 9-13).
13. Norman, M., Foy, M. & Hill, C. (1993). Youth Development Focus Issues: On violence, sexual messages and the media (p. 63-69).

14. Palm, G. (1992). Marriage and Family Development: Father involvement: Different paths to father involvement (p. 62-64).
15. Strauss, M. (1993). People and Programs: Ten myths about spanking (p. 3).
16. Tharp, L. (1993). Marriage and Family Development Focus Issue: Self care for caregivers (p. 60-64).
17. Titus, T. (1992). Youth Development: Warning: Chemically dependent kids need special attention (p. 45).
18. Walsh, D. (1995). People and Programs: Selling Out America's Children (p. 17-18).
19. Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Physical and Chemical Hazards Unit (1994). Basic Parenting: How safe is your home? A check list on poisons (p. 39).
20. Wolfe, J. (1992). Media and Outreach: Household hassles: Balancing work and family (p. 31-36).

Source: Minneapolis, MN: Family Information Services

Table I

T-Test for Independent Samples by Proposition (as indicated by thesis variables)

	N	Sum	Mean	Sum_sq	SS	Var.	St.Dev.	t	Sig.(Dir.)
1. Socioeconomic Status to Developmental Needs									
5	42	8.4	426	73.2	18.3	4.2778	3.4345	< .005	
	8	1.6	18	5.2	1.3	1.1402	(c.v. = 5.04)		
2. Family Structure to Developmental Needs									
5	28	5.6	186	29.2	7.3	2.7019	3.05	< .01	
	8	1.6	18	5.2	1.3	1.1402	(c.v. = 3.36)		
3. Program to Personal Well-Being									
5	18	3.6	122	57.2	14.3	3.7815	- .1118	n.s.	
	19	3.8	79	6.8	1.7	1.3038	(c.v. = 1.86)		
4. Program to Negative Well-Being									
6	44	7.33	440	117.33	23.5	4.8442	1.2979	n.s.	
	23	3.83	189	100.83	20.2	4.4907	(c.v. = 1.81)		
5. Individual Qualities to Well-Being									
6	66	11.0	964	238.0	47.6	6.8993	1.9322	< .05	
	27	4.5	223	101.5	20.3	4.5056	(c.v. = 2.23)		
6. Community Support to Well-Being X Family Support to Program Participation									
5	1	.2	1	.8	.2	.4472	- 3.7947	n.s.	
	7	1.4	11	1.2	.3	.5477	(c.v. = 1.86)		
7. Challenge and Productivity to Program Change									
5	19	3.8	119	46.8	11.7	3.4205	2.4841	< .025	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	(c.v. = 2.90)		
8. Overall									
7	224	32.0	9954.0	2786.0	464.3	21.5484	2.1043	< .05	
	92	13.1	1796.0	586.9	97.8	9.8899	(c.v. = 2.18)		

Table II

Thesis Themes

Academic Satisfaction	18
Career Development	12
Self-Concept	10
Counselor Role & Function	8
Self-Esteem	6
Substance Abuse	5
Sexual Attitudes	3
Attitudes to Alcohol	2
Relational Violence	2
Eating Disorders	2

Others themes with 1 thesis:

Attitudes to HIV/AIDS, Attitude to Disabled, cultural Awareness, Embedded Discrimination, emotional exhaustion, childhood Fear, Jealousy, Locus of Control, Loneliness, Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator, Professor Effectiveness, Sex Role Stereotyping, Stress in Nursing.

Table III

Sample Distribution

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Number</u>
University Students	26
High School Students	17
Middle School Students	15
Elementary School Students	8
Adults	17
Other:	
Elderly	1
Pre-School Children	1
Total	85

Table IV

<u>Sample Size</u>	<u>Number</u>
1 - 49	5
50 - 99	14
100 - 149	24
150 - 199	16
200 - 249	7
250 - 299	5
300 - 349	5
350 - 399	3
400 - 449	2
Total	81

Table V

Thesis Curriculum Areas

AREAS	School	Mental Health	Student Affairs	Community	Total
Human Development	12	3	15	4	34
Social & Cultural Foundations	8	3	6	3	20
Helping Relationships	7		2	1	10
Group	1		1		2
Lifestyle & Career	4			3	14
Appraisal	1				1
Totals	33	6	31	11	81